

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

The Meadow Historic District 2021 Update
Name of Property Caroline County, VA
County and State 15000276
NR Reference Number

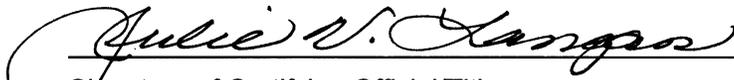
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**State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X additional documentation \_\_\_ move \_\_\_ removal  
\_\_\_ name change (additional documentation) \_\_\_ other

meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official/Title:

5/10/21  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- additional documentation accepted
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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The Meadow Historic District was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places in 2015. The property is significant at the statewide level under Criteria A and B in the areas of Entertainment/Recreation, Commerce, and Agriculture, and is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The property's period of significance is 1936-1973. At the time of listing, the property met Criteria Consideration G for its direct association with the Triple Crown winner Secretariat as the horse was born and trained at The Meadow. The additional documentation herein provides additional information for Section 8, the Statement of Significance, including interview excerpts and personal recollections, about the African American grooms who worked at The Meadow during the historic period and their experiences with Secretariat. The property's historic boundary *has not changed* as a result of this nomination update.

**Section 8. Statement of Significance**

The African Americans in the community of Duval Town (now known as Dawn) in Caroline County, Virginia, have a history with Meadow Farm that has origins in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the Morris, Tillman, Mines, Iverson, and Goodall families were enslaved by the Morris family. A cemetery for enslaved persons is located at The Meadow but is not within the Register-listed historic boundary. The community of Duval Town was established by emancipated African Americans after the Civil War. They and their descendants continued to work for the Morris family after emancipation as servants, grooms, and cooks, as well as for Chris Chenery, a cousin of the Morrises who bought the farm in 1936. The majority of the grooms who worked at The Meadow lived at Duval Town. Each morning, the farm truck would make its rounds through the community, picking up the grooms and bringing them to work. They and other African American workers played an integral role in the birth and training of several prize-winning racehorses. Writing in 2013, Steve Haskins observed, "Riva Ridge Road and Sadie Lane comprise the settlement known as Duval Town... Sadie Lane was named by the county after the matriarch of the extended family that lived there. Known as 'Aunt Sarah' or 'Aunt Sadie,' she cooked for Penny Chenery's mother in the 1940s.

The African-American grooms and trainers of The Meadow were never as well known as Secretariat's subsequent racetrack groom Eddie Sweat and exercise rider Charlie Davis. The Meadow grooms and trainers were the first to take care of "Big Red" (Secretariat's nickname) and the other champions of Chris Chenery's Meadow Stable. The following individuals have been documented as working there: Bannie Mines, Alvin Mines, Samuel Tillman, George Washington Tillman, Lewis Tillman Sr., Lewis Tillman Jr., Garfield Tillman, Raymond Goodall, Magnolia Goodall, Eloise Romain, Clarence Fells, Iola Fells, Howard Gregory, Charlie Ross, Wesley Tillman, Sarah Morris Mines, and Raymond "Peter Blue" Goodall.

Some of the grooms had passed away before Kate Chenery Tweedy and Leeanne Meadows Lavin started work in 2007 on *Secretariat's Meadow*, a book about the Chenery family, the racehorse, and the farm. Several of the surviving grooms gave interviews and participated in a videotaped oral history project. They shared stories that had never been told and the authors noted their gratitude to the retired grooms for so vividly enriching the book. Following is an excerpt from *Secretariat's*

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*Meadow: The Land, The Family, The Legend* by Kate Chenery Tweedy and Leeanne Meadows Ladin (Manakin-Sabot, VA: Dementi Milestone Publishing Inc., 2010).

Following is an excerpt from *Secretariat's Meadow* that includes recollections of the men who worked at The Meadow and with Secretariat as a foal and yearling.

“A Good Hand on a Horse...the Grooms of Meadow Stable”

They grew up working with their hands in the rural Caroline County of the post-Depression years. Local jobs were scarce and mostly limited to cutting pulpwood for the local sawmill, working on the railroad, in a mechanic shop or as a farm laborer. But the calloused black hands of the men who became the grooms of Meadow Stable would touch some of the greatest Thoroughbreds in racing ...and leave their own indelible imprint on the history of The Meadow.

Their names did not appear in the headlines or record books, but Lewis Tillman, Sr. and Lewis Tillman, Jr., Bannie Mines, Alvin Mines, Charlie Ross, Wesley Tillman, Garfield Tillman, Raymond “Peter Blue” Goodall, Howard Gregory and others from the closeknit web of local families most assuredly contributed to the success of Meadow Stable. Personally selected for their jobs, these men would be entrusted with the daily care of the valuable broodmares and their foals, helping with the early training of skittish colts and fillies, the transportation of finely-tuned racehorses and the handling of powerful stallions in the breeding shed.

Wesley Tillman came to work at The Meadow as a youngster. In 1946, at the age of twelve, he began helping in the hay fields with his grandfather Samuel Tillman during the summer.

“My grandfather said, ‘If you’re big enough to walk all the way down here to the farm, you’re big enough to work.’ So he gave me a pitchfork and I started throwing hay on the wagon. That was my first job,” Tillman said. He made two dollars a day.

By age eighteen, he was helping his uncle Lewis Tillman, Sr., who was in charge of the broodmare barn. They would turn the horses out in the morning after feeding and get them back up in the evening. In the meantime, they would clean out the stalls and put in fresh bedding. When the mares and foals came back up from the Cove in the evening, they would feed them and put them in their stalls for the night. Wesley also pulled night watch duty when mares were getting ready to foal.

His next job was “up the hill” to the yearling barn. “That’s when I started breaking horses,” Tillman said. “You had to be real gentle with any horse and take your time with them. If you groomed them right, they would even get to like you so you could get them to cooperate with you.”

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The next stop for young horses was the training center located across Route 30 where they would begin to learn the fundamentals of racing. The grooms would saddle the horses up for the exercise riders for the day's work on the Meadow track. Afterwards, the grooms would wash the horses, brush them down and put them on the hot walker (a mechanical walking machine) for awhile. Lastly, they would lead them back to the barn and turn them out into the fields until feeding time. In between their grooming duties, the men would cut grass, fix fences, paint barns or do other chores around the farm.

Tillman, along with other grooms, sometimes traveled with the horses when they were shipped out as two-year-olds to the training stables in Hialeah, New York or Delaware. As they would see, it was a different world outside the rolling green fields of The Meadow.

"Everybody was treated equally at the farm," Tillman said. "I didn't see any racism. We were all like a big family."

But on the road, in those days of segregation, "coloreds" were not allowed in many restaurants or hotels. "I had to stay back in the back with the horses from here to New York," Tillman explained. When the van stopped for lunch, the white driver, Bill Street, would bring him his meal which he ate in the van as the racehorses munched their hay and occasionally sneezed on his food. If the grooms did take a break from the van, they had to go to the back door of the restaurant to get a sandwich or eat in the kitchen with the cooks. Mostly they shrugged it off as part of their job.

At the racetrack, the Meadow grooms would stay with the horses for maybe three or four weeks. "We had our bunks right on the end of the barn, so if anything happened, like if the horses would get down in the stall or start kicking, we'd be right there with them," Tillman said. After new grooms were hired and the horses were settled in, the Meadow grooms would return to Virginia to start working with the next crop of young hopefuls.

Alvin Mines first came to The Meadow at the age of eight or nine, tagging along with his grandfather Lewis Tillman, Sr., who was affectionately called "the Mayor of Duval Town" (their nearby community). He remembers playing in the fields with the other grandchildren until feeding time when his grandfather would call the mares and foals up from their pasture in the Cove.

"Man, the horses used to come running up, maybe about fifteen of them with their colts and the foals," Mines recalled. "I remember we're grabbing round his leg because we thought the horses would run us over. He said, 'Don't worry, the horse is not going to bother you.' And sure enough, they'd come up and they'd just circle around you and go on."

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Alvin began working at Barn 33, also known as “First Landing’s Motel” around 1974. (First Landing was the sire of Riva Ridge.) There with groom Clarence Fells he helped with the visiting mares who were to be serviced by the Meadow stallions. Often the mares had foals at their sides, who did not want to leave their mothers for even a few minutes.

“I had to hold the foals and then you were in a rassling match!” Mines said.

Next he worked at the broodmare barn with his uncle Lewis Tillman, Jr. Later he went across the road to work at the racetrack/training center, with his brother-in-law Raymond Goodall. Goodall was the chief groom for Riva Ridge.

He taught the short and stocky Alvin how to handle the tall, high-headed Thoroughbreds who often did not want to have a halter or bridle put on them. It seemed that farm manager Howard Gentry liked to test the young groom by giving him the tallest horse in the barn to lead. Mines recalled being jerked off the ground more than once.

The grooms who had a special way with horses were highly respected at the farm. This was particularly true of Howard Gregory, who worked at The Meadow for nearly thirty-two years. He was known as “the stud man.”

He began as a farm worker, making twenty-five dollars a week in the 1940s. Like the other grooms, he had no prior experience with horses, other than some farm mules. He simply learned by doing, mostly under the watchful eye of Howard Gentry, who supervised all the breeding.

He had been working at the training track for several years when Gentry offered him the job taking care of the stallions, along with a raise. “He told me I had a good hand on a horse and no fear,” Gregory recalled. “I had five young children to take care of, so I took the job. I did not know what I was getting into!”

He took charge of six stallions, each of which had his own paddock. Breeding time was around 2:00 p.m. each day in the breeding shed. Some days there would be four or five mares to be serviced.

“I had three horses that died in there,” Gregory noted. “One was Third Brother, a full brother to Hill Prince. He just dropped dead after breeding the mare.” Another time, a stallion fell over dead, nearly crushing Howard Gregory and Howard Gentry against the wall.

One stallion, named Tillman in honor of Lewis Tillman, did little to flatter his namesake. He was especially rank and ill-tempered. “That horse looked to kill you!” Gregory said, adding that the horse would charge at any groom who entered his paddock. Gregory was the only one who could

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handle him. "I had many people come watch me," he said of those who came to learn his techniques.

His favorite stallion was First Landing. "He was very, very mannerable," Gregory noted. "When I would take him around to breed, you'd never hear him squeal or make a whimper or nothing."

Despite the inherent dangers of his job, Gregory said, "I would turn back the hands of time" to do it all over again.

Charlie Ross also came to the Meadow in the early years. He would earn the distinction of being the last Virginia groom to take care of Secretariat before the colt was shipped down to Lucien Laurin's training stable in Hialeah in January 1972. Though track groom Eddie Sweat and exercise rider Charlie Davis were more closely affiliated with "Big Red" during his meteoric racing career, it was Charlie Ross, along with trainer Meredith "Mert" Bailes, who helped start Secretariat under saddle.

Ross had been working at the farm for over twenty years when Secretariat was transferred over to the training center and became one of his charges. He held the colt while Bailes first "backed" him, laying himself over the colt's back to get him accustomed to human weight. He was the groom who led Secretariat around with his first rider, Bailes, in the saddle.

"Yeah, he sat up on the saddle in the stall and I turned him around in the stall, waiting until he got used to that. Then the next move we would take him out in the big round shed and we'd walk him around in there until he'd get used to that," Ross recalled. He added that Secretariat did not act up or buck like some of the other horses did in those circumstances.

Typically taciturn, Ross admits he was a part of history. Then a flash of pride breaks through and he says, "They called me The Man," for his way with horses. He agreed that the early care a young horse receives can influence him for life.

Alvin Mines put it best. He said, "I think the horses, once they got the feel of the grooms that were working with them, there was something that grewed up in them, you know. They go to someone else's hands when they leave here, but I think the horses always know who had the first hand on them."

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Figure 1. Meadow groom Lewis Tillman holding a colt for his Jockey Club identification photo. Photo by Bob Hart.

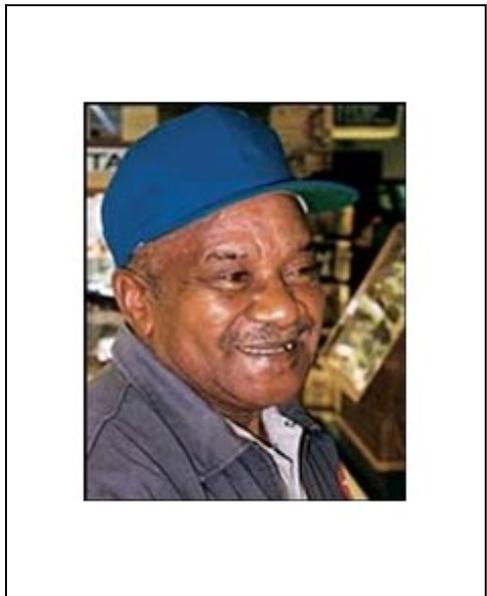


Figure 2. Retired groom Charlie Ross.

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The following excerpts of interviews with retired grooms who worked at Meadow Farm took place in 2001 and are quoted in the article, "Meadow's Grooms Remember Big Red" by Steve Haskin as published at Blood Horse (June 28, 2013)

<https://retirement.bloodhorse.com/blogs/horse-racing-steve-haskin/archive/2013/06/28/haskin-series-part-4-meadow-s-grooms-remember-big-red.aspx>

Charlie Ross worked at The Meadow for 37 years, taking care of some of the best-bred yearlings in the country. One of the yearlings turned over to him in early 1971 was a powerful chestnut colt by Bold Ruler, out of Somethingroyal, who had already been given the name Secretariat. Ross spent nearly a year grooming Secretariat, watching him trim off pounds of baby fat and develop into a racehorse and eventually into a legend.

At the farm in 2001, Ross showed writer Steve Haskin Secretariat's stall. "See these two holes," he said, pointing to a pair of nail holes in the open top door. "This is where I hung the plaque that read: 'Secretariat, by Bold Ruler out of Somethingroyal.' Yeeaaaah, it does bring back memories. I remember when I used to stand outside this stall in the sunshine, just as I am now.



Figure 3. The end stall with the open door, usually reserved for the star of the crops, is where Secretariat spent his early days.

"I got Secretariat in the spring, along with five other yearlings, and I remember liking him when I first saw him. He was built real strong, and because he was so big and powerful, it took him a while to get it together. He was a very quiet horse to work with and I didn't have any problems with him. He had no bad habits; no biting, no kicking or anything like that. Meredith Bailes used to ride him a lot and he thought he might

be something, but he really never showed anything to make us believe he was gonna become such a great horse."

Ross and several of his former coworkers still lived in Duval Town (now Dawn) in 2001. On

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Riva Ridge Road is the house of 66-year-old Bannie Mines, who along with Howard Gregory and Lewis Tillman, took care of Secretariat when he was a foal and weanling. A few doors down lives Raymond “Peter Blue” Goodall, who was Riva Ridge’s groom when he was a yearling. Gregory lives several minutes away, across Route 30, on Gregory Road. One of his neighbors is 74-year-old Wilbur “Bill” Street, who spent most of his time at the track, but did team up with his brother Harry to van Secretariat from the farm to Hialeah in January of 1972 to start his racing career.

Gregory worked at The Meadow for 31 years and another several years after Penny Chenery sold the farm. Gregory was around Secretariat from the day he was born, which was March 30, 1970, at 10 minutes past midnight. Dr. Olive Britt, The Meadow’s veterinarian, remembered getting a call from the nightwatchman, telling her that Somethingroyal was in the middle of foaling. By the time she arrived, Somethingroyal had already given birth. Britt, who now lives in nearby Goochland County, said farm manager Howard Gentry watched the foal get to his feet and said “This is what we’ve been waiting for for 35 years.”

Gregory could tell right away the colt was something special. “We knew from the get-go he was different from any horse we ever had,” he said. “There was definitely something there. I remember him being very alert, and he’d test you. When you walked him to the paddock your mind and his had to correspond. If he thought you weren’t paying attention he was gone. You had to have your mind focused on him at all times. I also worked with Riva Ridge and he was an altogether different horse. He was so quiet, and all you had to do was say, ‘Whoa, Riva,’ and he’d just stop and stand there. But Secretariat would try you in a heartbeat. You had to know what you were doing, because he always knew when you had him and when you didn’t. And if he knew you didn’t, that was it; he was gone.”

Wayne Mount, who broke and exercised Riva Ridge and once had the privilege of galloping Secretariat, remembers the day when Secretariat was just a baby and somehow got over the fence and ran out on the busy Route 30. A truck driver saw him and got out of his truck and managed to grab hold of him before one of the grooms ran out and brought him back.

It was Mert Bailes, son of the farm trainer Bob Bailes, who used to get on Secretariat. Mount recalled, “The first time Bailes got on him on in the indoor riding barn and was straddling him, the colt crow-hopped three times, like that rabbit in the cartoon, and then just went right about his business, walking and then trotting, just like he was supposed to do. He never missed a beat. It was amazing. One day we were all walking our horses in the barn, cooling them out and Mert says to us, ‘Boys, one day you’re gonna read about this horse.’ He said it three times, and I finally said to him, ‘Bailes, you don’t know that. This horse ain’t even hit the dirt outside yet. He’s just a baby, we don’t know what he’s gonna be.’ And he said it again, ‘I’m tellin’ you, you’re gonna read about this horse one day.’ I told Mrs. Tweedy about it and she said she hadn’t heard that before. I told her, ‘Well, Mert Bailes keeps sayin’ it.’ How he knew that I’ll never know. I’m sure it was the way he felt under him. There was something about him. After that, Mert wouldn’t let anyone else get on Secretariat.

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“One day, Mert had somewhere to go and I got to gallop Secretariat for the only time. I have to admit, he was just a big, beautiful horse to me. I couldn’t tell anything different about him. But Mert Bailes knew better. Secretariat was totally different than Riva Ridge, who was such a sweet horse with those lop ears. I loved Riva to death. He was a little spooky at first. He was tough to hold galloping alongside horses; he just wanted to go and always be in front of the other horses. To this day I still could kick myself for not going to the Kentucky Derby. I remember watching the Marlboro Cup and yelling at the quarter pole for Riva to ‘Beat him! Beat him!’ But when Ronnie yelled over to Eddie Maple, ‘How much you got?’ Eddie yelled back, ‘I’m all out,’ as Secretariat went right on by him.”

Gregory has many memories of Big Red and his days at The Meadow. “Secretariat was a gorgeous colt, with a beautiful head, and those three white stockings,” he recalled. “I’ll never forget watching the Belmont Stakes on TV. Lord, that was something to see. I’m very proud to have been around a horse like that. I remember putting his mother, Somethingroyal, in the ground after she died at age 31. I also buried Hill Prince. Those were really special days back then, and you couldn’t work for anyone nicer than Mr. Chenery. Money was never a problem, and we got bonuses and shares in winnings. I was available anytime they needed me, because I loved what I was doing and where I was working. When I wanted to build my own house, they helped me out. And because of Mr. Chenery, I live in a six-room house on five acres, and it’s all mine. There aren’t many people out there like Mr. Chenery anymore.

Mines worked at The Meadow for 25 years, mainly in the broodmare barn and helping out with the yearlings. “I remember Secretariat was a big, strong colt; bigger than the others, and very well built,” he recalled. “With the weanlings, we always tried to put the three best horses together, and the best horse would go into the first stall. I remember Secretariat was put in the first stall, so everyone must have felt he was the best. He gave you an idea even then that he might turn into something. It made me feel real good to see him become such a great horse. He was pretty easy to work with, but he had a temper, too. I had him for about a year, and then he went to Charlie.”

“I remember Raymond Goodall's mother, Magnolia, worked in the house, along with her sister,” Penny Chenery recalled. “And they were daughters of Aunt Sadie. They were all great people. The grooms were all in their 30s during the heyday of the ’70s. Whenever we won a big race, we gave them a week’s pay. They were wonderful to me. I clearly was not my father, but they were respectful and helpful as I was learning on the job. It was just a wonderful team.”

And they came up with a wonderful horse, believed by many to be the greatest of all time. There are only faint memories left for The Meadow’s grooms. But Howard Gregory’s eyes still light up when he thinks of the chestnut foal who would one day grow up to be Big Red. He rolled the images around in his mind for a few seconds before the words made their way out: “A horse like Secretariat. That will never happen no more.”

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